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北京着年报

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Reporters skip editors to pitch their stories to the crowd



Reporters have been crowd funding investigative journalism since David Cohn kickstarted the trend on Spot.us in 2008.

Now the trend has come in China.

The appearance of domestic crowd-funded journalism is surprising, given netizens' fragile trust of both the media and such funding platforms. But good journalism costs money.

"Many good topics cannot be reported in newspapers, but they may still be supported with the help of crowd funding," said Sheng Jia, CEO of funding platform Zhongchou. "We give reporters a new avenue to realize their ideas."

Hou Jiyong is among the first journalists to raise money for his work online.

His idea for an in-depth report on the lives of entrepreneurs in Chengdu received 3,400 yuan from 96 backers — enough to cover transportation to Chengdu, interview fees and other costs. For their gifts, backers were invited to run or play basketball with Hou or join his reading club.

Another 12 reporters are now seeking money in Zhongchou's new reporting section. They are attempting to cover topics such as how money has affected the domestic fashion world, China's Bitcoin obsession and the comic industry in Hangzhou.

One reporter, Yu Ying,

to cover dream chasers around the world. Her first crowd funded story is about the Norwegian Princess Martha Louise, who built a school to teach children how to discover

and communicate with

their guardian angels.

wants

The other overseas story was pitched by photojournalist Jayden Tang, who asked for 6,000 yuan to fund "Andrea," a photographic story of nude and makeup-free models work-

ing in Mauritius.

Although some stories were pitched as an experiment, many have received more money than they ever expected.

Wu Qianzi, one of the reporters, said she was unsure whether the backers were truly interested in her topics or whether they just wanted the gifts, which in her story included a place on the guest list at a fashion party.

But even before crowd funding, freelancers were raising private money to cover their reporting costs.

Liu Jianfeng, one of the pioneers of this practice, was inspired by Chen Sile, a student who succeeded in raising money to report on the Taiwanese presidential elections.

Liu began collecting money last July. Unlike reporters who pitched specific topics for funding, Liu only promised to write four to six reports. He said he considered using a crowd funding platform, but later found that most topics he wanted to investigate were not suitable for publicizing. Instead, he opened a store on Taobao to sell access to his stories to 2,500 readers for 100 yuan each. Thus far, he has 2,000 interested readers.

Liu recently finished his first story about reporter Chen Baocheng's investigation into demolitions in Pingdu, Shandong Province.

Liu's case highlights one of the main limitations of Zhouchou.com: readers who expect to back real muckraking may be horribly disappointed. Many reporters prefer sensitive investigative reports to be published with the backing of a major media group.

Finding a way to back hard-hitting reports will be a tough mission for Zhongchou. Spot.us raises most of its money by distributing advertiser questionnaires. Members who are willing to fill out a questionnaire bring in \$5 to support a report they have backed.

Spot.us has stopped accepting new pitches or donations untill next June, partly to evaluate its current business model. The new platform in China has a long way to go and few successful examples to guide it.

Zhubaijia helps mainland travelers rent abroad



Photo provided by Zhubaijia.com

By Bao Chengrong

Tourists have been saving money by renting homes, apartments and rooms ever since Airbnb made the process easy.

But language barriers both on the website and at host destinations have kept Chinese travelers out of the game.

Zhubaijia is filling that blank.

Co-founded by Cai Weixin, former president of Wimdu Asia, last October, Zhubaijia targets the mainland's outbound tourists and considers each household's spoken Chinese ability before adding it to the index.

Other selection criteria includes past experience of Chinese tourists, accuracy of online photos, general tidiness and access to transportation.

Tourists can already browse more than 400 homes in Hong Kong and 1,000 in Thailand. Many three-bedroom apartments in Hong Kong's Central District are priced the same or less than neighboring hotels.

Apart from rental services, Zhubaijia also cooperates with local tourism companies to provide private guides, transportation and tours. Zhang Hengde, the company's CMO, said package rentals and tours account for a third of their total orders.

The company plans to expand its services to include available properties in Taiwan, Singapore and Japan.

World's Confucius Institutes short on Chinese teachers

By Bao Chengrong

"Mandarin fever" has created a desperate shortage of Chinese teachers at the world's Confucius Institutes, which currently provide Chinese training to more than 850,000 learners around the world.

Xu Lin, director of The National Office of Chinese Language Council (NOCFL), said the program is urgently in need of more teachers during the recent 8th global Confucius Institute Conference

More than 100 million people around the world are studying Chinese, and that number is growing every year. But the number of qualified teachers is far from enough. Industry analysts say there will be a shortage of 5 million Chinese teachers by 2015.

Part of the reason may be high standards.

Applicants for the Confucius Institute program are required to have two years of teaching experience, as well as a professional background in Chinese, education, psychology, history and culture.

Teachers are expected to



Chinese calligraphy is popular at Confucious Institutes all over the world.

speak both standard Chinese

and be fluent in the language

of the country in which they

teachers are also expected to

be familiar with traditional

culture. The Confucius Insti-

tute at the University of Liv-

erpool requires applicants to

be able to teach calligraphy

Apart from language,

intend to teach.

and tai chi.

Only applicants who pass both the written and oral exams, as well as the psychological tests, can be recruited.

Xu Lin said fewer than a quarter of this year's 20,000 applicants were accepted.

Approved teachers must attend a two-month training session in Chinese calligraphy, papercuts other handicrafts.

To encourage more people to apply, the country is offering high salaries to teachers headed abroad. Professors who participate can earn \$3,000 per month. vice professors \$2,800 and They lecturers \$2,600. receive additional subsidies

to cover housing, air travel and medical expenses.

Those working in developing countries are eligible for extra subsidies.

Not all teachers work at Confucius Institutes abroad. The loneliness keeps many at home - or sends them running home early.

Xiao Hua, a teacher who used to work at a Confucius Institute, said she had few chances to communicate with her students after class since most worked part time. She also had few chances to practice her English since her social circle was limited to other Chinese people.

To solve the teacher shortage, NOCFL created the Confucius China Studies Program to encourage foreign students to come and study in China.

Doctoral students and those who want to pursue full-time PhD degrees in the humanities and social sciences at Chinese universities can apply for the program. Qualified teachers, scholars and talented young leaders can apply for the two-week exchange program.

Training studio boom brings robotics to kids

By Bao Chengrong

Robotics courses have been available in China since the 1990s, but finding and participating in one has been both rare and expensive.

Only the recent boom in training studios, hyper-focused after-school education programs, has made robotics accessible to common families.

Unlike many studios teaching robotics, Beijing's ROBOROBO Studio accepts students as young as

To simplify the programming process, ROBOROBO uses its own visual punch cards that contain code blocks. Students can program their robots simply by adding and removing cards.

ROBOROBO Studio was founded by Hou Jinggang in 2008.

Hou used to be the marketing manager of a children's English training organization, but a trip to a robotics contest in South Korea inspired him to switch markets. At the time, no one was offering robotics education for young children.

Hou contacted South Korean robot maker ROBOROBO to set up a partnership. The Korean company would provide brick robots and singlechip micvoco (SCM) robots, and Hou and his team would create a curriculum.

The entry level classes teach children to make brick robots and use the programming cards. Intermediate classes focus on building SCM robots and using simple components such as LEDs, buzzers, motors and sensors.

The highest classes teach the children how to control and operate the SCM robots in a contest settings.

Comparing to Lego training studio that cost between 12,000 yuan and 15,000 yuan per year, ROBOROBO Studio is much cheaper. Full year courses cost as little as 4,000 yuan. Enrollment must be renewed to continue each year.

Hou said the rolling enrollment encourages teachers to develop their teaching abilities. About 70 percent of the students choose to continue each vear.

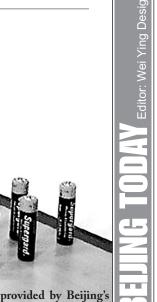
ROBOROBOStudio has



Beijing's ROBOROBO Studio

branches in Beijing, Shang-Tianjin and Chengdu, Most are located in business centers near other training organizations.

Hou said the major challenge is getting people to appreciate the value of robotics training. He plans to expand the studio with more devices, such as model airplanes, to develop it into a general technology training school.



ROBOROBO Studio

Spain shares 25 years of advancement in video art

By Liu Xiaochen

The Embassy of Spain and Beijing Instituto Cervantes are exhibiting the works of Spain's 25 best video artists through January 23. The exhibition catalogs international advancements in both video and Spanish visual language.

At the opening ceremony on December 10, curator Menene Gras, director of the China Strategy Casa Asia, spoke about developments in video art and compared its state in China with critic Huang Du and video artist Miu Xiaochun.

Gras said video art is omnipresent, and a powerful tool that changes creativity, the art market and cultural economy.

"The 25 video works in this exhibition will leave viewers with a deep understanding of what's happening in this field: not only in Spain, but throughout the art world," she said.

"These works are extraordinary because they are the products of artists in different ages," Gras said. "This exhibition focuses on how the artists completed their works. It looks at advancements in video art and attempts to present a complete system without borders."

Theme is not always the core of the matter, Gras said, although it can be a main component of the display image.

Unlike other fields, video art is very focused on bringing different materials together.

"Moving pictures give the artists the opportunity to emphasize communication, and it's the communicative ability that brings strength to film and television art," she said.







By vlcsap. 2013

Cai Yuanpei seeks scholars, students for scientific exchange

By Liu Xiaochen

The French embassy's fifth Cai Yuanpei program is now accepting applications from interested students and universities. The rotating program fosters Sino-French cooperation in scientific research by promoting laboratory cooperation and joint PhD training.

Cai Yuanpei maintains a list of 25 approved French and

25 approved Chinese research projects. Supported projects will receive eight researchers or students: four Chinese and four French.

The 2014 selection of Chinese participants is underway, and interested domestic universities or research institutions must apply before January 15.

Visiting scholars will be exchanged for three months;

joint training students and researchers for six to 24 months. Cooperating programs are cycled every two years, and this is the only opportunity for Chinese institutions to enter before 2016.

The National Scholarship Fund provides a one-time round-trip international travel fee and scholarship living allowance for the study period of Chinese students. French students studying in China are exempt from the Chinese personnel registration fees and other scientific research costs in France.

Before participating Chinese members are sent abroad, the French side of the partnership will provide a month of training in French language, culture and research methods.



The Cai Yuanpei program was founded by the International Cooperation and Exchange Department of the Ministry of Education, the China Scholarship Council, the Ministry of Education and Research in France (DREIC), the Department of Foreign and European Affairs in France (DGMDP) and Campus France in 2009.

Canada begins push to win winter tourists

By Liu Xiaochen

Chinese tourists who are looking for a memorable ski holiday don't need to head to expensive European resorts.

The Canadian Tourism Commission is promoting Canada's top ski destinations in Alberta, Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario and the Northwest Territory with a series of creative marketing activities that began December 7.

In addition to introducing popular Canadian tourist destinations, the country is also working with travel agencies to develop customized products for Chinese tourists.

It is also working with airlines to boost the number of flights between Canada and China. As of this summer, there were 82 round-trip direct flights from China to Canada each week. Tourists can continue to apply for 10-year multiple entry visa.

On December 7, the commission announced its promotion at the Beijing Nanshan Ski in Miyun County.

"The Chinese market is one of the most important overseas markets in Canada," said Derek Galpin, chief representative of the Canadian Tourism Commission in China. "Skiing is more and more popular among Chinese tourists ... We have a lot of high-quality powder snow and a longer snowy season, making Canada an ideal destination for ski holidays."

Canada's geography and winter climate helped it win the Olympic Winter Games bid in 2010 and 1988.

Canadian Ambassador Guy Saint-Jacques said he is a fan of Chinese pair skating champions Shen Xue and Zhao Hongbo, and that he hopes to see Beijing and Zhangjiakou's bid for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games succeed.

In addition to skiing, Canada offers other winter activities like snowshoe walking, dog sledding, snowmobiling and ice climbing. Yellowknife and parts of Alberta are some of the best places to view the northern lights during winter.

Beijing Nanshan Ski's Lu Jian and the representatives of Travel Commissions from Canadian province of Alberta, the British Columbia Province, Ontario province and Quebec Province attended the event.

It also has many winter festivals, such as the Ottawa Winter Carnival, Quebec Winter Carnival, Louise Lake Ice Sculpture Festival, Telles World Skiing and Snowboarding Festival.

Canada's traditional foods are also worth trying, like iced maple syrup, hot gravy fries, iced wine with a "liquid gold" and Alberta beef.



Chinese athlets compete at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics in Whistler, Canada.

CFP Photo

French Orchestra celebrates diplomatic ties with performance

By Liu Xiaochen

2014 is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and France.

To celebrate, the French National Orchestra of Lyon will visit China for a series of New Year's concerts from December 29 to January 4 in Shenzhen, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing.

The tour, supported by the Embassy of France, is the orchestra's first visit to China since 1979.

The orchestra will be led by conductor Léonard Slatkin, a seven-time Grammy Award winner and music director of the orchestra since August 2011.

Slatkin's last visit to China was in 2008, when he led the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to the concert repertoire, Slatkin will also play "Carmen's Hoedown," composed by his father's orchestra.

Cellist Wang Jian will perform Cello Concerto by Saint-Saens with the orchestra in Hangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing. The piece was originally Wang's debut with



Cellist Wang Jian

the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in 1979.

The French National Orchestra of Lyon was founded in 1905 and has built a reputation for its unique timbre. In April 1979, it brought the French classical pieces "Ma Mère l'Oye" and

CFP Photo "Symphonie Fantastique" to

China for the first time.

Since Slatkin took over in September 2011, the orchestra has toured Japan, the US and Europe. It frequently cooperates with established artists and also plays works by modern composers.

Hit the ice at the capital's skating venues



Skating area in Shichahai

🖳 By Liu Xiaochen

Olympic Sports Center The Olympic Sports Center's ice rink is the city's largest with more than 23,000 square meters of ice. It's sparsely used, which is good news for anything living in the northern central area.

The rink is divided into the areas for skating, ice sledding and hockey.

The rink matches the international standard of 61 meters long and 30 meters across. It is created using ethylene glycol ice production, the most advanced and environmentally friendly method at present. Ice is 5 centimeters thick.

It takes 48 hours to prepare the ice.

Taoranting Park

Taoranting Park is a one of the largest and most prominent parks on the city's south side. The normally quiet park comes alive each winter when it opens for ice skating.

There are two places to go ice skating in the park: one is South Lake by the park's south gate, and the other is the north side of the lake by the east gate and north gate. Skating in the park is popular with south side residents who are looking for a fun family outing.

Shichahai and Beihai

Shichahai and Beihai Park

Beijing's winters are harsh and the temptation to stay cooped up indoors is great. But many of the city's more interesting activities are only available in

Ice skating is popular in Beijing, and winter is the one time of the year people can enjoy outdoor skating. With ice sleds, bicycles and boats, residents of all ages and abilities can enjoy ice sports.



Children learn to play ice hockey



Young people like skating at Taoranting Park



The Royal Ice Festival in the Old Summer Palace

are some of the best skating sites in the city's center.

The ice in Shichahai is the best on the city's northwest side. Traffic is usually light, and the park is in a prominent cultural area surrounded by well-kept hutong homes and cultural museums.

Shichahai becomes a natural skating area each winter, and many of the skating scenes featured in various TV series are shot there. The park's view of the White Pagoda is especially beautiful after a winter snow.

Visitors who don't want to skate can rent an ice sled or bicycle to explore the frozen lake. The park has 200 single and double ice sleds and 40 ice bicycles.

Skating rinks in Haidian

Yuyuantan Park has three

skating areas: one at the south gate of the Lotus Pond, one at the park's south gate and another at the east gate.

The "ice parks" including single and double sleds, ice bicycles and ice boats.

Weiming Lake in Peking University is a more cultural choice. Its ice is deep enough for skating about 30 days each year, and it's popular with the college crowd.

Since the beginning of last year, the Old Summer Palace is also promoting a Royal Ice Festival. It includes skating and skiing activities and intangible cultural heritage such as Royal Circus recreations, performing arts and other interactive entertainment.

Zizhuyuan Park's skating area has Beijing's longest ice slide at 17.5 meters.

Stage Show

Children's Carnival: Journey to Fairy Land

Offer your kids a feast for their eyes, ears and tongues. Children can enjoy fun games as well as a sumptuous buffet lunch and free soft drinks. Cartoon Living Theatre's Snow White is the most stunning part of the carnival, and will give your little ones the chance to connect with the storybook prince and princess.

Where: Valley Wing Grand Ballroom, Shangri-La Hotel,

29 Zizhuyuan Road

When: 10:30 am to 2 pm, December 21 and 22

Price: 688 yuan per person, 1,800 yuan per family of three

Tel: 8882 6888; 6841 0013



The Imperial Russian Ballet company is a member of European Cultural Center in Moscow under the patronage of the European Parliament. Don't miss the chance to see this classic favorite from one of the world's top ballet companies.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Center Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie,

Xicheng District When: 7:30 to 9:30 pm, December 28

Price: 380-1,500 yuan Tel: 400-610 3721



since he took first place at the XIV Chopin International Piano Competition. At the age of 18, YUNDI became the youngest and first Chinese winner in the history of the competition. He will show his amazing ability to tickle the

Where: Beijing Workers Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 to 9:30 pm, December 31

Price: 280-1,280 yuan Tel: 400-610 3721

Email: ponypiao@damai.cn





Yundi New Year's Eve Concert

Internationally acclaimed pianist YUNDI has been in the spotlight ever ivories at this year's New Year's concert.

Music

The Old Beijing Dixieland Band and CAD73



A drum and double bass, bluesy guitars and an inspired wind section will have Modernista hopping to Dixieland classics. Keep dancing after the performance with the funky tunes of DJ CAD73. Shots are priced as low as 10 yuan after midnight!

Where: Modernista Old Cafe & Tapas Bar, 44 Baochao Hutong, Gulou Dong Dajie, Dong

-cheng District

When: 10 pm to 2 am, December 21

Phone: 13691425744

Email: modernistabj@yahoo.com



Maybe Mars' Christmas Eve

Maybe Mars hauls out the big guns and unleashes its party animals on Beijing's unsuspecting populace with a Christmas Eve show that includes AV Okubo, Duck Fight Goose, a reunited Birdstriking and fully mobile Carsick Cars.

Where: Yugong Yishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District (west courtyard former site of Duan Qirui Government)

When: 9:30 pm to 1 am, December 24 Price: 80 yuan (presale), 100 yuan (door)

Email: media@bingmasi.com



Sweating: Muma & Third Party

Acclaimed and photogenic Beijing hard rocker Muma returns to Beijing with his band Third Party for a pre-New Year's Eve show. Expect both new material and classics at their first club gig in the capital since 2011.

Where: Yugong Yishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu,

Dongcheng District (west courtyard former site

of Duan Qirui Government)

When: 9 to 11 pm, December 27 Price: 80 yuan (presale), 120 yuan (door).

Phone: 6404 2711

Email: info@yugongyishan.com

Landscape paintings in oracle bones

Sinologist Zhao Wengeng is teaching children about the ancient pictoral origins of oracle bones. Oracle bone inscriptions are the earliest known examples of Chinese characters. Many of the characters are not merely ideas, but are landscapes and sketches unto themselves. With some imagination, simple characters known to all young students transform into beautiful images.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Dashangzi Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chao -yang District

When: 10 am to 11:30 am, December 21 Price: 100 yuan for adults, 50 yuan for children, free for 2012 UCCA Members.

Tel: 5780 0200

Nearing ink

Scholars have used ink and wash painting as an outlet of expression for more than 1,000 years. This exhibition features four artists who have dabbled in ink for decades while acting as educators, curators or critics. It includes a discussion about ink and wash and how present-



day artists inherit the qualities of their classical predecessors

Where: EGG Gallery, 327 Caochangdi, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District When: 10 am to 6 pm, December 22

Communi

Christmas Day at the Great Wall

Let the children make cookies under supervision of the Canteen while the grown-ups sit back with something hot by the fire in the Smithy. Whenever you're ready, sit down to a Country Christmas supper served just for you.

Where: The Schoolhouse at Mutianyu, Mutianyu Village, Huairou

District When: 11 am to 10 pm, December 25

Price: 248 yuan for adults, 120 yuan for children 4 to 12, free for children younger than 4

Tel: 6162 6506

Monthly book swap & board games

We have hundreds of books to swap! If English isn't your thing, there are also books in French, Dutch and Portuguese. Come over and check out this fabulous opportunity to offload anything taking up space on your shelves. Grab a few new books and make some friends!

There are only a few rules: we don't accept textbooks, classics or Chineselanguage titles because those are all easily available here. We'll also be having several lively board games, in case you've

been dying to play Settlers of Catan or the Chinese version of Monopoly.

Where: The Local Bar and Grill, 4 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District When: 2 to 8 pm, January 4

Tel: 6591 9525





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